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J. Howard

From Lady Ogilby to line

Balderson House

Near Dunbar



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In the Press,

CONVERSATIONS on COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY
and the OUTLINES of GENERAL HISTORY.

CONVERSATIONS
ON THE ART OF
MINIATURE PAINTING.

CONVERSATIONS
ON THE ART OF
MINIATURE PAINTING;

DEDICATED,
WITH THE SANCTION OF HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF RUTLAND,
TO THE
HON^{BLE} MISSES FORESTER.

BY
EMMA E. KENDRICK.

“Treasured thoughts, and gathered flowers,
Dreams of youth, and love, are ours ;
All the strains that Poets breathe,
Mingle with the buds we wreathe ;
Ours the task their leaves to twine,
And offer them at Painting’s shrine.”—ANON.

LONDON:
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Stamford-street.

TO THE
HON^{BLE} MISSES FORESTER.

IT having been my pleasing task to have the honour of directing your efforts in the art of which this book professes to treat, I know not to whom I can more appropriately dedicate it, than to those who have at once so elegantly and so accurately put in practice the rules which it has been my province to impart : particularly, as my doing so has the kind sanction of her Grace the Duchess of Rutland, whose powerful and undeviating patronage has been extended towards me, through the whole of my professional career ; and to whom I cannot refrain from thus publicly offering the humble tribute of my gratitude for the many favours which have been conferred upon me by her Grace.

Feeling the natural timidity which always attends the first appearance of an author, I entreat your

indulgence for my work ; in which I have only aimed at conveying instruction in the fullest and simplest manner possible ; carefully avoiding all technical terms, and chiefly labouring to make myself thoroughly understood—and trusting you will not regret having extended your kind and valuable patronage towards me,

I remain, most gratefully,

and respectfully,

your obliged,

EMMA ELEANORA KENDRICK.

CONVERSATIONS

ON

MINIATURE PAINTING.

ELLEN.

My dear Miss K., I am going into the country, quite unexpectedly, to stay a long time; and, instead of taking regular lessons in painting as I first intended, I am come to beg you to have the kindness to give me instructions, that I may be enabled to practise by myself whilst I am out of town.

MISS K.

That I will do most willingly, if you will promise to adhere closely to my advice.

ELLEN.

Oh! you may depend upon my doing that; for I am most anxious to take a portrait of Mamma.

MISS K.

Though I rather object to your commenc-

ing from life immediately, yet, as you will be absent for a long time, I will instruct you how to paint your Mamma's portrait first, if you will take into consideration, that the very same process is required with regard to a copy from a picture as from life, though the latter is infinitely the most difficult.

ELLEN.

How can that be when it is so much more interesting ?

MISS K.

The difference of difficulty is this—a picture is always quite still, and the light and shade is the same ; whereas from life, the slightest movement makes an alteration in light, shade, attitude ; in short, in every possible respect. However, there will be one advantage in giving you instructions from a living model, which is, that I shall be able to acquaint you with all that is required for both, without fatiguing your mind with a repetition, for it would be scarcely anything else ; and thus, when in the course of our conversation I find there is anything to enlarge upon, either in copy or portrait, I will, with your permission, do so.

ELLEN.

Oh yes ; for then I shall learn double what I otherwise should.

MISS K.

Have you ever tried painting ?

ELLEN.

Very often—and I have even been trying several times to paint Mamma's portrait—but I don't know how it is, I always make some of the features too large and some too small, so that the face looks quite ridiculous.

MISS K.

That is, I suppose, because you attempt to finish them separately, and consequently, the parts of your sketch are like a number of little pictures of eyes, noses, and mouths, instead of being the portrait of a face ; you will never produce a likeness, or a good picture, without all the parts are in exact proportion to each other.

ELLEN.

But how am I to manage that, for there is the difficulty ? Pray tell me all that is to be done to make a picture from the very beginning ?

MISS K.

Before I give you any instructions as to the proper proportions of a face, it will be necessary to tell you what materials you must provide yourself with for painting; since you know, that miniatures upon ivory are not sketched with pencil, but painted in their proper colours from the first touch. It will thus be necessary to provide yourself before you begin, with a proper palette, upon which you must put the following colours, that you will be continually in want of:

Vermilion,	Ultramarine,	Raw Sienna,
Light red,	Burnt umber,	India yellow,
Vandyke brown,	Burnt Sienna,	Indigo,
Seppia,	Purple madder,	Pink madder.

You will also want the several other colours, which as they are used more seldom, need not be regularly put upon the palette; these are,

India red,	Carmine,	Antwerp blue,
Raw umber,	Constant white.	

ELLEN.

What a list ! I had no idea half so many colours were necessary !

MISS K.

These are only the positive colours, which are afterwards to be subdivided into tints for use ; as you will see by the following table of the mixture of tints and colours.

Purple madder, seppia, and indigo,	} For dark shades and black.
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Purple madder, and sep- pia ; and also vermi- lion and ultramarine,	{ For sketching in the picture. The madder and seppia also forms a fine shade for pearls and white drapery.
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Ultramarine and India yellow,	} For a white drapery and pearls in addition to the above.
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Ultramarine and raw Sienna,	} For the light shades of a face.
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Pink madder and ultra- marine,	} For the same in addition to the above.
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Light red,	{ A good tint delicately used for flesh in the stronger parts.
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Vermilion, and raw Si- enna,	} Flesh tints.
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Indigo and Indian yellow, A beautiful green for drapery.

Indigo and India red, A fine grey shade

Indigo and burnt Sienna, A good dark shade.

Burnt umber and purple }
madder, } Ground-work for gold.

White, After tint for ditto.

India yellow, Ditto ditto.

Burnt Sienna, To shade at last.

Seppia and raw Sienna, Light hair.

Purple madder and Van- }
dyke brown, } For the shade.

Burnt sienna and seppia, Auburn hair.

Burnt Sienna and ultra- }
marine, } Shade for a dark complexion.

Purple madder and ultra- }
marine, } Ditto ditto.

Vermilion and ultrama- }
rine, } A useful shade for a face.

Vermilion and seppia, { A good mixture for the dark
parts of a face.

Purple madder and India }
yellow, or raw Sienna, } Good flesh tint for a dark
complexion.

Ultramarine, seppia, and }
a little vermilion, } A good tint for a stone wall,
or vase.

ELLEN.

Oh ! I shall be a long time before I want
to make use of such a variety of tints !

MISS K.

Not so long as you imagine ; for you will find a great many wanting, even for Mamma's portrait.

ELLEN.

Let Mamma's portrait then be your example in all you tell me ; for I shall understand what you say twice as well, if you will take that for your theme.

MISS K.

By all means : we will suppose you provided with ivory properly prepared, your palette with the colours I mentioned, and brushes of either camel-hair or sable. You will then have all the necessary materials, and must proceed to learn the manner of stippling : to do this you must first burn off the tip of your painting brush to prevent its being too pointed, and then try to do as much as you can each touch, in order to preserve the transparency of the colouring.

ELLEN.

Oh dear ! this is quite different to what I expected ; I thought that stippling required as fine a brush as possible, and that it should be done in little strokes.

MISS K.

Certainly not, till you have arranged all your colours to the power you wish them to be ;—when your eye is satisfied with the rough and broad arrangement, a short time will suffice to finish them with effect.

ELLEN.

But how am I to find out how to finish them with effect? You tell me nothing about that.

MISS K.

On the parts you have painted in this rough manner you will find many touches too dark, and many places too light. You must then carefully take your paint-brush, rather moist, but with no colour in it, and dot off the ugly touches which you will find by half closing your eyes, and looking at your picture from a greater distance than if you were painting. You will probably take off too much until you become versed in the practice, but do not let this discourage you ; for, though it be true, that nothing can be done well without practice, it is also true, that practice will enable us to do anything.

Having adjusted the dark parts as well as you can, you must then try to fill up with care those spaces which you have made too light, and also those where your unpractised hand has taken off too much. Whilst doing this, however, you must always remember to keep beauty in your mind, and to endeavour to fill your spaces so as to make your picture look as pleasing as possible. I allow that you will probably find it very difficult to do this, and I do not doubt but you will often seem to have been labouring in vain; nay, that you may sometimes fancy you have not been taught the right method: but after some time, and a little vexation, you will suddenly find that a new light breaks upon you; that you have acquired the faculty of seeing the rough places, and that you are become able to smooth the picture according to your wishes.

ELLEN.

Should I use a large brush to paint with?

MISS K.

A moderate-sized one, and a small one,

are all that are required, unless I may say, an old brush is the best for sketching in your picture.

ELLEN.

This reminds me of another of my pictorial troubles ; when I touched over a part already painted, I found that I took off the under colour.

MISS K.

You no doubt touched too hard, or your brush might have been too wet, or the under colour not sufficiently dry for the purpose.

ELLEN.

Then do tell me how I am to know when my brush is rightly fitted ?

MISS K.

You must be particularly mindful that you have not your brush clogged with colour, which is a fault so frequent with beginners, that they sometimes spend half their time in rubbing the colours upon the palette, quite forgetful both of the injury the paint-brush receives, and the time that they are losing : the tints also are much better when made on the palette accidentally ; and, if you merely take

up the quantity you wish for at a time, you will find your brush infinitely more obedient.

ELLEN.

You do not say a word about a scraper ; and yet I have heard that a lancet or knife should be used in miniatures.

MISS K.

My plan of painting is without gum ; and with me dotting off supersedes the use of that instrument.

ELLEN.

And why do you not use gum ?

MISS K.

I think gum is apt to mildew ; and it has various other disadvantages, such as chipping off, &c. Another objection is, that when the scraper has been used the picture cannot be seen properly but in one light ; whereas, without gum and the scraper, any light will do : besides which, there is more real touching or painting in this than in the other method, which has always appeared, to my mind, too laboured to shew the talents.

ELLEN.

Now I wish to ask you if I should not

put little touches, dots, or strokes, when I am doing the finishing part?

MISS K.

All as occasion requires : for instance, if the space you wish to fill up be only the size of a dot, then paint a dot ; but if a stroke seem the most judicious, then add that ; in short, it requires your own discrimination and judgment to choose which will be the best, and to give the most pleasing effect to the whole. We will now return to the picture, which we will suppose is just about to be commenced.

ELLEN.

The first thing that I want to know is, how to make all the features of the proper size?

MISS K.

This you can never do, if you attempt to draw the features separately without considering their proportions. You should, in the first place, make an outline the shape of an egg ; then divide it in half, which line will be the place for the eyes, remembering that there must always be the distance of an eye between the two eyes of a well-proportioned face :

then proceed to divide the lower half of the egg exactly, which will be the place for the nostril ; while the mouth must be put midway between the nostril and the bottom of the egg. We will then divide the other half of the egg, which gives the top of the forehead where the hair begins. I must also tell you, that there is another important line, called the centre, which passes down the front of the face, through the middle of the forehead between the eyebrows, down the tip of the nose, the tip of the lip, and the chin ; or, rather, where the dimple appears, if there be one. When this line is made, you must imagine an exact triangle from the bottom of the egg and the line which marks the root of the hair ; the point where the two lines meet (which form the sides of the triangle) will give you the place for the ear.

ELLEN.

But how long must the ear be ?

MISS K.

Exactly the length of the nose ; that is, you must fancy a line from the nostril, and another from the top of the eye, which will

give the length of the ear. Having made this rough sketch, you may now proceed.

ELLEN.

But how? For I am still quite at a loss.

MISS K.

You must endeavour to fix in your mind a clear idea of the whole which you intend to draw, and then transfer it to your ivory in as easy and bold a manner as you can; being very mindful not to particularize too much in your first sitting, but to try to obtain the general effect of the head and face. You will find ultramarine and vermilion, mixed together, a delightful tint for making the first sketch; they being colours that easily chase away if you put a false touch, and yet form an excellent grey for the first effect. Remember, also, that you must never touch ivory twice in the same place while it is wet, though, perhaps, I need scarcely remind you of this, since you have already felt its ill effects. You must take care to let your touch always be as light as possible; you must endeavour to place all your strokes one way, so as to have them quite regular; and

you must put in your shades as you go on, for the eye and mind should both be satisfied with the work during its progress.

ELLEN.

Notwithstanding the rules you have given me, I find that the faces I draw are not like those which you have done ; the features look so cramped and stiff, that one would think my model must either have been pinched with famine, or stamped out of pasteboard.

MISS K.

You must not expect to attain perfection without time and labour ; and it is quite impossible for a young artist to draw as well as one who has had experience. It is a good plan to sketch a great deal in order to give boldness and facility to your hand : but observe always to make your sketch with as few strokes as possible ; for nothing more strongly marks power, and shews the masterhand, than this : it is, indeed, one of the most common faults of young artists, to make a dozen strokes where one would be enough ; and this is solely because they do not give themselves time to reflect where that one touch ought to be placed.

ELLEN.

I am surprised to hear you lay so much stress upon the first sketch.

MISS K.

I assure you that it is of the utmost importance to be correct at first ; for the highest finish is thrown away upon a picture which is badly done in the first instance.

ELLEN.

I am aware of that ; but it seems so easy to draw correctly ; one has only to copy what one sees.

MISS K.

True ; but it is not so easy as you imagine to see correctly, for though the accuracy of a painter's eye is proverbial, it is not so much natural, as acquired. There is indeed a great deal in learning to see ; and though this may at first appear strange to an amateur, a little practice will prove the truth of my assertion. Reubens, Rembrandt, and several of the old masters, were so well aware of this, that they accustomed themselves to copy a flower with a sheet of white paper placed at a little distance behind it, solely

for the purpose of acquiring a great nicety of eye. You will do well to follow their example, and indeed you will find it useful to copy every thing within your reach : first, little pieces of wood, giving them the proper light and shade ; then a glass, a basin, or indeed any simple article you please. When the drawing of these things can be managed so as to give them proper effect, proceed to others more difficult ; and thus, by imperceptible degrees, you will give knowledge to your eye, and facility to your hand.

ELLEN.

But these are only general rules ; let us return to Mamma's portrait.

MISS K.

In painting a portrait from life, you are to work entirely after nature, and to express, as closely as you can, all you see ; working, as nearly at the same time as possible, upon those parts which are most resembling to each other. For example, the eyes, the cheeks, the nostrils, and the lips should be kept in progress together ; so that as soon as you

have touched one, you may proceed to the others ; and this is necessary, lest the interruption caused by spending too much time upon any particular feature, should make you lose the idea of the expression of the whole ; and also the resemblance which the other parts ought to bear to the one upon which you have spent your time.

ELLEN.

I should have thought it better to finish each part separately.

MISS K.

You would soon find that impracticable ; for I assure you that neither your memory, nor the expression of your subject, will last long enough to admit of your proceeding piece-meal ; that is, finishing one feature before another is in a state of forwardness. You should, indeed, always fancy every sitting to be the last and only opportunity you are to have of seeing your subject ; and this will make you anxious to produce a sketch, or picture, all parts of which are in such an equal state of finish, that if any accident should prevent you from going on with it,

you may be able to let it be seen with pleasure ; which certainly would not be the case, if, instead of getting the general effect rough, you had a small piece laboured, and nothing done to the other parts.

ELLEN.

I have been so long accustomed to a different method, that I fear I shall have great difficulty in breaking through it : indeed, though your plan may be better for the general effect, I think mine must produce the highest finish ; and surely that ought to be the principal object attended to in painting miniatures, since the most beautiful always look like enamel.

MISS K.

Even if your opinion were correct, and your plan the only one by which the effect you speak of could be obtained, I do not think “ finish ” the *principal* object to be attended to in miniature painting. On the contrary, too close an attention to minutiae damps the genius, which ought to be encouraged to produce pictorial effects, rather than laborious finish. One is the study of

the mind, the other mere mechanical labour. You must not, however, suppose that I wish you to get a slight or sketchy style of painting; for, when the general effect is once produced, I will give you leave to make your picture as much like "enamel" as you please. What I want to guard you against, is partial finishing, or bestowing too much attention upon detached parts, without thinking of the effect of the whole; a method, which not only betrays poverty of conception, but gives a wiry effect to the painting, that ought to be carefully avoided. The best way to escape this, and to acquire a large, broad touch, is to set yourself a task to do a great deal in a given time, the eye being so extremely fastidious, that if it be allowed leisure, the painting is rubbed out, and seldom altered for the better.

ELLEN.

That is very true; for I have often been vexed to find improving too much, spoilt my drawing: indeed when I had altered one part, I was obliged to alter another, and so on, till all was changed, and the general effect lost.

MISS K.

It is for this reason, that I have so strongly urged you to keep all parts of your picture in an equal state of forwardness ; since it is only by close attention to this observation, that your mind can be formed in such a manner, as to enable you to produce a just and harmonious effect.

ELLEN.

But after the first sketch is made, surely the features must be finished separately, if you wish to catch the exact resemblance of each ?

MISS K.

It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to give them any resemblance by painting in that manner, I assure you ; for it is easy to imagine that by the time the eyes and forehead were completed, the subject would be either beginning to feel fatigue, or it would be time to leave off : thus, when you descended to the cheeks, mouth, and nostrils, you would find the expression which had served you for the upper part of the face, gone ; and the whole countenance so

changed, as to be like another person. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to abide by the observation last mentioned, and to give a touch or two to each feature successively, till the whole is complete.

ELLEN.

I will endeavour to remember all you have told me ; and, during the few days that I remain in town, I will begin a portrait by myself, in order, if I should make any mistakes, that I may have the advantage of your advice, while it is in my power to obtain it.

MISS K.

Try then, at your first sitting, to put in practice all that I have told you. I will give you a list of the colours I mentioned, with the various tints produced by their mixture, and I hope with a little attention you will be able to apply them properly.

ELLEN.

Oh ! do not fear ! I understand it all thoroughly ; and to-morrow you shall see my sketch.

MISS K.

Till then, adieu.

CONVERSATION THE SECOND.

ELLEN.

OH, my dear Miss K., I am quite in despair. You surely must have made some mistake in the colours you told me to make use of for Mamma's portrait. I did just as you bid me, and yet see what a horrible thing I have made.

MISS K.

I cannot flatter you on your success, certainly; for no one could possibly suppose, from this sketch, that your Mamma had so beautiful a complexion as she possesses.

ELLEN.

Beautiful complexion! It is more hideous than a negress! Oh, I could cry with vexation! What can be the reason that it is so frightful?

MISS K.

The features are not badly designed; it is

only the colour that is too dark : you seem to have been looking at your Mamma through a piece of slate-coloured glass, for you have made the lines of her face quite black.

ELLEN.

And yet I used purple madder and seppia ; the very colours marked in the list of tints for sketching in.

MISS K.

But they should have been mixed *pale*. Indeed, as it was nearly a first attempt, it would perhaps have been more prudent to have taken ultramarine and vermilion, which would have done equally well, and which (as I before told you) are colours that easily chase away if you make a false touch.

ELLEN.

Oh, but I thought I was in no danger of doing that !

MISS K.

You see the consequence ! Your Mamma is delicately fair ; her features are regular, and the lines of her face should have been softly and slightly touched ; you, on the contrary, have made them so hard and strong,

that they remind me of a figure carved in wood by the Tyrolese peasants.

ELLEN.

How provoking, that I should have made poor Mamma to look such a figure ! I assure you I am so vexed, I do not think I shall ever dare to touch a painting-brush again.

MISS K.

You must not be discouraged because you have not succeeded in your first attempt. Perseverance is necessary in every thing ; and, in the end, it is almost always crowned with success. Remember, that though Columbus was nineteen years before he could persuade any sovereign to patronise his intended voyage of discovery, he did succeed at last, and was the finder of the New World. Let his example animate you ; and, instead of despairing because you cannot do what you wish immediately, rouse yourself to overcome the difficulties you have met with. You have already attained one great point—the face you have sketched is well proportioned ; and, though certainly not a flattering likeness, has yet some resemblance to that of your Mamma.

Another trial, I do not doubt, will be more successful ; and be sure you let the mixture for sketching in be very pale : use pink madder, or vermilion and raw Sienna mixed, for the complexion, and indigo, purple madder, and seppia for the hair.

ELLEN.

But see ! I have mixed these very colours as pale as possible, and they only make a kind of grey ; or, rather, a dirty, muddy colour, not at all like Mamma's beautiful black glossy ringlets !

MISS K.

This tint makes a beautiful black when mixed thick ; and, though I told you to use some colours pale, the rule does not apply to all. In fact, you must exercise your own judgment to know when it is requisite for them to be thick, and when thin. Had your Mamma's hair been light, you might have used raw Sienna, and seppia brightened with a little purple madder ; and if her complexion had been dark, you must have added a little purple madder and burnt Sienna to the tints I before mentioned.

ELLEN.

But how am I to alter these hideous black lines? Can I rub them out without spoiling the ivory?

MISS K.

Yes; and if the place requires to be re-prepared, a little pumice-powder, or the scuttle-fish bone pounded, will answer the purpose; and this may be used either wet or dry.

ELLEN.

What colour must I paint Mamma's eyebrows and eyelashes?

MISS K.

The same as her hair. They generally, indeed, are the same colour. You must use ultramarine and raw Sienna for the shadows of the face; purple madder and ultramarine for the shadows round the eye; and ultramarine for the blue vein down the nose.

ELLEN.

And how must I manage the eyes?—Mamma's are brilliant hazel.

MISS K.

You must then use purple madder and seppia. If they had been blue, you must

have taken ultramarine, indigo, and a little of the mixture (which I told you to use for the hair), very pale. Grey eyes require the last-mentioned tint, mixed with raw Sienna. The whites of the eyes must always be shaded with ultramarine. When you touch the cheeks with vermilion and pink madder, put a little on the chin ; and by the jaw-bone a gentle shadow of the colour of the hair must be mixed with the shadows of the face. The throat must be ultramarine and raw Sienna, worked up with vermilion and yellow.

ELLEN.

I think I now perfectly understand the colours which I must make use of, and I shall feel obliged if you will have the goodness to tell me how to proceed with the second sitting.

MISS K.

First particularise all the features while the face is free from fatigue, with the colours and tints which approach nearest to your subject ; but observe carefully the general tone of shade. In some faces the predominant tint

will be green ; in some lilac ; and in others, not at all clear. When you have once noticed this, you must be careful that all your shades partake of that particular tint ; for unless this be attended to, you will make one shade of one colour, and another quite different ; and you will thus entirely destroy the harmony of your colouring, which ought to be simple in all its stages.

ELLEN.

But this seems very strange. Surely Mamma's face is neither green nor lilac ?

MISS K.

Certainly not ; and if you were to make your shades in either colour as strong as you did the lines in her face, at your first sitting, your picture would look ridiculous. The tints in your shadows must all be subdued and softened, so as not to produce a harsh effect by themselves, but to blend gently with the colours which surround them.

ELLEN.

I think now I understand what you mean. Have not the pictures of Murillo and Leonardo da Vinci something of a green tint ?

MISS K.

They have ; and this gives a peculiar mel-
lowness and richness to their colouring. To
return to your picture. You should observe
that the shade upon the nose is more grey
than that which the nose gives ; or, to ex-
plain this more fully, the shade under the
nose has a warmer tint than the other. A
little purple madder and seppia are useful
colours to add to the shade for this purpose.
Purple madder, used pale, will also give the
colour for the upper lip. The under lip,
however, will require vermilion, as bright
as the subject will admit of ; and the shade
under this lip must be the decided colour of
the general tint of the shades of the face,
which I before alluded to. You must now
begin to put the carnation upon the cheeks.

ELLEN.

I think it was for this purpose that you
told me to use vermilion, and pink madder.

MISS K.

I did so. You must next proceed to har-
monise the whole with pink madder and raw
Sienna mixed ; adding other tints from the

list of mixtures, according to your own discretion as to the precise colour required. This, in fact, shows the natural gifts of an artist more than any thing else ; for no two painters see the same face with the same eyes, either for colours, taste, or drawing.

ELLEN.

Has any reason ever been assigned for this ?

MISS K.

Some have supposed it to arise from the aqueous humour of the eye being accidentally tinged with a peculiar hue, since, if any part of this humour becomes opaque, spots will dance before the eyes, and every object appears tinged with colours that do not belong to it ; while others suppose that it is caused by the peculiar formation of the crystalline humour, which acts as a species of lens, and, according to its concavity or convexity, refracts some rays of light, and (of course) some colours more than others. Whatever the cause may be, the effect is certain, and occasions that predominance of one tint, which we frequently find in all the pictures of the same master. The

next thing to be attended to, is the figure, for the proportion of which you must remember, that from the tip of the chin to the waist is the length of a head ; or rather, that of the egg in your first sitting. If you draw a front figure, it must be two heads across the shoulders : from this scale, you may easily guess the width of the throat, and its length must be a nose and a half.

ELLEN.

Oh ! I shall never draw a front figure, sitting quite straight.

MISS K.

You may avoid stiffness in that, or any other position, by slightly varying the attitudes of the face and figure. For instance, if the figure be straight, the head may be a little turned ; or the contrary, as may be best for effect. You must next add a little drapery, arranging it to the best of your taste and judgment. You may, however, copy as closely as your eye will permit, if you observe to think of the letter *y* whilst you are doing so ; for that will assist you greatly, as the best folds all take the shape of that letter.

ELLEN.

I am afraid that I shall have great difficulty in acquiring a knowledge of the principles of light and shade.

MISS K.

It would be very useful for you to learn a little geometry, as the knowledge of angles and squares is of great assistance in the marking out of shadows to the mind's eye, whether you are copying from nature or a picture.

ELLEN.

You will frighten me if you talk of geometry! I would not become pedantic for all the world!

MISS K.

A knowledge of rules, or of what may be called the grammar of any art or science, is absolutely necessary to ensure perfection, and, consequently, must be admired so long as the general effect is the only part which is seen. It is when persons are so awkward as to show the tools they have used to produce this effect, that they become pedantic. By reflecting on the forms of shadows, and

comparing them with each other, you will find a surprising regularity in their shape ; and you will discover, that nearly all are either angular or square. The same may be said of lights ; and it is a great point to make both as square and broad as possible. It is advisable to look attentively at the ancient sculptures, to understand this properly. The beautiful breadth of light and shade produced by the squareness of form peculiar to Phidias, &c., can never be sufficiently appreciated, or otherwise attended to. The grandeur of this style, indeed, cannot be surpassed.

ELLEN.

What you now say will make me regard sculptured figures with much more attention than I ever did before. My uncle, to whose seat I am going, has some very fine modern statues, and many casts from the antique.

MISS K.

Nothing can be better adapted to form the eye, and to cultivate the taste, than to view fine collections of pictures and statues, pro-

vided you try to find out only their beauties when you look at them. By these means, your own mind will be impressed with better ideas, and your judgment will gradually become refined. A severe critic can never make a good artist, because he studies only defects, and reverses that rule which is equally true whether applied to painting or moral conduct—I mean, the sentiment which teaches us to encourage good propensities, and to set aside bad ones, as the only method to attain excellence.

ELLEN.

You have given me quite new ideas respecting light and shade, and I am impatient to try their effect.

MISS K.

You must not, however, expect to succeed immediately, since the most perfect theories are not always easily reduced to practice. The first object is, to consider what effect will be produced by every touch, previous to its being placed; and, in order to ascertain this, you must picture to yourself distinctly what you wish to represent, before it can be

transmitted to the ivory ; for the mind must reflect upon the impressions which it has received, before the pencil can act. The power of doing this can only be gained by constant and severe study ; the works of the ancient masters must be as frequently and attentively examined as your opportunities will allow of ; and, as your mind and judgment acquire strength, analysed, part by part, in order to discover the exact merits of those pictures which have gained the highest reputation.

ELLEN.

That will be very difficult. Indeed, I own that at present I am so far from being able to discover all their peculiar merits, that I have often thought pictures of little value more beautiful than those esteemed by connoisseurs almost inestimable.

MISS K.

You must not be discouraged on that account ; for even Sir Joshua Reynolds, when he first saw Raphael's Cartoons, was astonished that he did not discover their merits. In fact, he thought them bad, but

his good sense instantly suggested, that the fault must be rather in his own judgment than in pictures which had stood the test of ages. He then determined to study them attentively, in order to discover their excellencies ; and he did this so effectually, that in course of time he was able properly to estimate that inimitable grace which is peculiar to Raphael, and which so far distinguishes him from all his rivals.

ELLEN.

But I thought it was considered bad to copy from pictures ; since all must have some faults, and the copyist of another artist has the faults of his prototype as well as his own.

MISS K.

I did not recommend you to study the ancient painters merely to imitate them ; for, though it may sometimes be useful to copy good pictures, and beautiful designs, Nature is still a nobler resource ; and, in proportion as you become acquainted with her, you will find that she elevates your soul, and augments all the powers of your mind. The noblest works of art, indeed, appear poor, when com-

pared with the sublime grandeur of Nature ; and as, in taking her for your model, you will find it necessary to seek for her perfections in order to appropriate them to yourself, you may thus gradually acquire that intense and exquisite susceptibility of beauty which is the instinctive quality of great minds.

ELLEN.

What ! do you consider it a mark of a great mind to be always admiring ? I thought that clever people were generally fond of finding fault.

MISS K.

True genius, like the bee, can gather honey from every flower—or rather, like the sun, it enshrines all creation in the glowing hues of its own brightness. Every object in nature has both beauties and defects, and I think the faculty of instantly perceiving the former one of the most estimable gifts which has been bestowed upon man. It was this fine sense of beauty which enabled the ancient masters to attain their surpassing excellence. They represented Nature as they saw her, in all her loveliness, and in all her simplicity ; only

exercising their judgment to discover which of her numerous perfections were most available for the purposes of art. Let us follow the same plan, by selecting their observations, and the examples which they have left us to direct our choice. Knowledge cannot give genius, but it may so direct its efforts as to render them of greater effect ; and by observing the merits or defects of others, we may profit by their experience without losing time by purchasing it for ourselves.

ELLEN.

Notwithstanding this, I cannot help thinking that a close attention to rules must cramp genius, and cannot fancy that either Raphael or Correggio ever studied geometry. At any rate I am certain that they have no angles in their works.

MISS K.

You have quite misunderstood me, if you imagined that I recommended you to use geometrical exactness in drawing your figures ; on the contrary, you must carefully avoid all lines or outlines that are similar ; and you must shun with disgust either parallels or

sharp-pointed forms. Positive squares and triangles would be frightful in a miniature painting, where all should be ease and grace ; a gentle, waving, serpentine line is the line of beauty ; and sharp angular projections, by being too exact, spoil the effect of the picture, and displease the eye.

ELLEN.

But did you not tell me just now that it was necessary to learn geometry in order to know the shape of the shadows ?

MISS K.

Yes ; but remember that though the effect of shade may be of a geometrical form, it is yet of so subdued a nature that only the painter's eye can discover it ; and, if too much precision were observed in delineating the regular forms it falls into, harshness would intrude, and feeling be destroyed.

ELLEN.

Then you do allow feeling to be necessary, as well as knowledge of the rules of art ?

MISS K.

Certainly ; it is indeed very wrong to tie the hand entirely to given rules, as, if too

rigidly adhered to, they would injure the natural talents, and diminish the powers of genius. The principal advantage of storing the mind with knowledge of this description is, that it forms a foundation, or ground-work, upon which a future edifice may be erected. It is by instilling a few decided principles into the mind, and pointing out the path which is to be followed, that the painter can alone be rendered capable of choosing judiciously between the beauties and defects both of nature and of pictures. This is, indeed, the only true method of obtaining a correct taste for the art, and is far preferable to any thing that can be gained by attending merely to mechanical rules. Grace is seldom or never found in exactness; and true genius soars above servile imitation. A soul or spirit should breathe through the whole, and it should be rather the expression than the mere lines of a face which you should try to represent.

ELLEN.

This may be true with features, but there can be no expression in drapery.

MISS K.

You should, however, preserve a close attention to effect throughout the whole picture, and should take care that all the principal lines contrast each other properly; that is, that a compound line should always stand near one that is simple or plain, and—

ELLEN.

Pray, let me interrupt you a minute just to ask what you mean by a compound line, and what is the difference between that and a simple or plain line?

MISS K.

A compound line is one which has many breaks or divisions in it; such as, drapery with many projecting appearances at the edges, in consequence of a quantity of folds; or indeed any line, which is interrupted by accidental or other causes, and has its general smoothness destroyed. Having taken care to arrange the lines so as to produce variety, you must next attend to the proper distribution of the lights and shadows; and you must particularly endeavour to avoid an error which young artists are very apt to fall into; which

is, that of making no difference between a positive light and a reflected one, though the first should always be doubly, nay trebly brighter than the other.

ELLEN.

But what is the difference between a positive light and a reflected one?

MISS K.

A positive light is one which shines through a window, or in any direction where it is clearly and strongly defined. A reflected one is where there is no real light shining upon the part in question, but where the rays are first cast upon one object, and thrown from that to another. A reflected light must be between two shadows; and, as I said before, is always a subdued light, and much less distinct than a positive or real light ever can be.

ELLEN.

Are there different kinds of shadows as well as lights?

MISS K.

Certainly: a cast shadow is of a similar nature to a reflected light; it is never so

deep, or so intense, as a real one. In fact, the shadows are always the darkest where the lights are most brilliant ; and it may be remarked, that in most pictures there is generally an equal quantity of light and shade, the most common proportion being half light and half shade ; and that, even in artificial effects, where a difference is found, it is always in regular proportions ; as two-thirds or three-quarters of either light or shade, with the other portion for the contrast. Rembrandt is the master whose effects of light and shade are in the most extreme proportions ; and it is said that he acquired this manner, from which he never departed, from having been accustomed for many years to paint in a mill, where the light only came from above. You must observe one point more before we quit the subject ; which is, that two lights never unite without having a shadow between ; and that two shades have, in the same manner, always a light, or a reflected light, to divide them.

ELLEN.

I suppose that I have now learnt enough to be able to complete the second sitting ?

MISS K.

Not quite ; for it will be necessary to begin the background, of which, as yet, you know nothing ; and perhaps no part of the picture depends more upon the taste of the artist than this. There is an anecdote told of Rubens, which it may perhaps be well to repeat here, in order to impress upon your mind the necessity of attending to this point. An inferior artist, being in distressed circumstances, applied to Rubens for relief, and begged him to give him any kind of employment that he pleased, alleging that, at any rate, he should be useful in painting “the *backgrounds*, or any other subordinate parts of his pictures ;” when Rubens replied, that if he could paint *backgrounds*, he was sure that he needed no assistance from any one, for experience had taught him to consider them the most anxious parts of his own pictures. Having made you thus aware how essential it is to attend to backgrounds—I will now proceed to give you instructions how to paint those most generally used for miniatures. If you wish the general effect to be grey, though when

examined closely it appears shot with a variety of colours, you must first put on ultramarine in detached parts; then Indian yellow; then purple madder; then green formed of indigo and Indian yellow; and then Indian red. These will cover the whole background in a rough manner; but you must be particularly careful to make them all of the same power, and not one stronger than another. You must also put them on the ivory with constant attention to harmony and neatness. When these bright colours are properly distributed, you must work carefully over the whole with a soft grey, till they are all blended and mingled together, so as to produce the desired effect. The same plan must be followed to make a brown ground, using for the detached colours the different yellows; then purple madder; then raw umber; then burnt umber; and afterwards working up the whole with seppia indigo, and ultramarine mixed. This background, when well managed (which however, I own, is no easy matter), has an uncommonly rich and beautiful effect, and suits remarkably well

with green and red drapery ; particularly if a dash of yellow or gold, or a rich black, be introduced in some part of the picture ; the latter is especially valuable. Indigo and burnt Sienna also make a good background tint.

ELLEN.

I think you have now told me quite enough to enable me to go on. I have only one more question to ask. I suppose my painting must be covered up when I am not working at it, for I have read in the life of Gerard Dow, that one reason of the exquisite beauty of his finish, was the care with which he prevented the least particle of dust from adhering to his pictures, while they were in progress. It is said, that when he went into his painting-room in a morning, he sat carefully down and waited till every particle of dust, which might have been disturbed by his entrance, had subsided before he ventured to uncover his work.

MISS K.

He was quite right to do so ; but it is not necessary for you to take as much care as Gerard Dow ; for in water-colours the paint

dries so soon that extreme care is not requisite. Still, however, you ought to keep your picture covered when you are not actually painting upon it ; and I wish to guard you particularly against the flies in summer, for those insects have so great a fondness for the colours used in painting, that in a few minutes they will spoil your whole picture ; and, what has always seemed astonishing to me is, that they invariably choose to eat off the features first.

ELLEN.

I suppose I must use silver paper to cover my painting—will that do ?

MISS K.

Linen is much better ; and there is nothing superior to an old cambric handkerchief, paper often producing a greasy and unpleasant surface, which the soap in the linen prevents. You will now be able to proceed till we meet again ; and, if you wish to judge properly, in the interim, of the effect produced by what you may have done, choose either the dusk of the evening, or half close your eyes so that the sight may be quite dim,

and look at your picture at the greatest distance your eyes will permit, when all your defects of light and shade, harmony, colour, or drawing, will become manifest. All lights, being subordinate to the principal one, should be less powerful the farther they are off, and by a faint light their faults, in this respect, are more easily discovered. The same may be said of shade. You, will now, I think, be able to finish the second sitting ; and in a few days I shall hope to see a brilliant specimen of your improvement in the art.

ELLEN.

I will try to do the best I can ; but I am not half so sanguine as I was before. How strange it is that difficulties should seem to increase with knowledge !

MISS K.

It is an old axiom, that the first step towards surmounting difficulties is to be aware of their existence. You have now made this first step, and the consciousness that you have done so, ought to afford a strong stimulus for you to go on. Adieu, till we meet again.

CONVERSATION THE THIRD.

MISS K.

I AM quite pleased with your picture this morning ; the general effect is very good ; and I perceive that you have both understood and profited by my instructions. You have now all the rough tints on the face, drapery, and background ; but it would have been better if the background and drapery had been a little more advanced than the face. You must attend to this another time.

ELLEN.

I suppose, now that the general effect is produced, I may begin to labour at the finish ?

MISS K.

Do not be too impatient. You must take care, before you begin to labour at the finish, that all your power of colour has been properly attended to, or your picture will have a heavy and unpleasant effect. Too much

labour, indeed, often spoils the best compositions, and produces hardness and tameness, instead of harmony. You must, indeed, touch the light parts of the picture as little as possible, till the shadows are all in.

ELLEN.

I found the hair very difficult. Can you give me any rules to simplify that, before we begin the next sitting?

MISS K.

You must paint it in as large masses as you can, and then touch the lights out with a clean paint-brush. The sooner you can arrange the mass of hair, the more spirited and easy it will be. *S* is the letter to think of, when you are painting locks of the round curling form.

ELLEN.

I am afraid mine are rather crooked.

MISS K.

They certainly are a little more like "Medusa's serpents," than flowing ringlets. However, you will, no doubt, amend this another time. We will now proceed to the third sitting. You must first consider your

picture carefully, and, by comparing it with your subject, try to discover where you have put wrong colours ; where too much, or too little ; and if the shadows are too dark, or the reverse. Having satisfied yourself in this respect, begin with the more careful touches. The eyes will claim your first attention ; and, taking your smallest brush, you must, with the utmost care and delicacy, strike off the superfluous touches, and add colour where it may be required. If the shade round the eye should want any tint of lilac, make it with purple madder and ultramarine, adding sometimes a little yellow. The nose, though a stationary feature, is a most difficult one to paint well : there are so many little shadows about it, which it will require your utmost vigilance to discover. You will find many little particulars on the face, such as a light down the nose, and a dot of white paint on the tip of it ; also a flash or stream of light on the cheek, one between the nose and the cheek, almost perpendicular from the eye to the nostril ; and another under the eye, where the shadow

ends† at the corner of the mouth. By pointing out these lights to your attention, you will soon learn to find them in your subject; and, seeing these, your eye will discover many more, for, in fact, they are too numerous to be all named.

ELLEN.

Of course these lights must vary, according to the position in which my subject is placed?

MISS K.

Nothing can be more clear; and I adapted my directions only to the position in which you have placed your Mamma, which is a three-quarter face, with the broad part turned towards the light. (The light in your painting-room, I should observe *en passant*, ought to be particularly attended to during a sitting; the lower half of your window being darkened with green baize, or something of that kind which will not disturb the eye.) Other particular lights will appear upon the face, in other positions; but I suppose that I need not enumerate them, as what I have said will be sufficient to set your mind properly

to study what it will be necessary for youⁿ to express.

ELLEN.

When I was sketching Mamma, I was quite at a loss to know what to do with her hands ; and, even as I have placed them, she looks as awkward as one of the seven Miss Flamboroughs, in the Vicar of Wakefield, who were drawn each holding an orange. Might not one of Mamma's hands be half hidden with her shawl, or employed in adjusting her veil ?

MISS K.

Not unless the fingers are seen, for the extremities of joints should very seldom be concealed, unless quite unavoidable ; and in a full length, the ends of the feet never. In a group, the figures which are behind others will never appear graceful or powerful unless the motions of the hands accompany those of the head. A looking-glass will instruct you in many beauties by giving objects a pictorial effect, which an unpractised eye would find it difficult to discover without some such me-

dium ;—and you may observe the same from nature, when you view an extensive prospect in an evening. We will now proceed with the picture : it is proper to put in all the dark shadows first, and then the medium tints, by which means you preserve your lights as brilliant as they are required.

ELLEN.

I am very glad you mentioned that, or I should have done just the contrary ; indeed, I should have begun by working up the lightest parts.

MISS K.

It is a common error ; but if the light parts are finished before the effect of the picture is seen, it causes an appearance of heaviness and poverty of colouring. You must now endeavour to brighten all your former touches with the most extreme care, for now the laborious finish will be required. We must have no more large broad touches, but in their stead a most careful adherence to the stippling I before described. Of course I need not tell you to put more colour on the cheeks, lips, and, in short, over the

face generally. Your own judgment must direct this, and you must endeavour to display as fully as possible all the varieties of art and expression.

ELLEN.

I am not satisfied with a common background. How must I manage to vary it?

MISS K.

Of course that must depend upon what you wish to introduce: if a red curtain, you must paint it with purple madder and vermillion, put on pale and plain; and shade it with purple madder, indigo, and seppia. If you wish to introduce the sky, you must use ultramarine, laid on as smooth as possible, and rather pale; the lower part must be raw Sienna and pink madder, which must be heightened near the horizon, where it should be more red, with a general tone of pink madder and yellow, mixed very pale. If a dull sky be wanted, it must be worked up with India red and indigo pale.

ELLEN.

When I look at the picture, I see a thousand things that I am sure I shall find very difficult;

for I do not know how it is, but though every thing seems so simple and plain when you tell it, that it seems scarcely worth mentioning, yet when you are not present, and I try to put your rules in practice by myself, I find a number of perplexities which I never thought of. This is very disagreeable, and I shall be very much obliged if you will have the goodness to tell me how to prevent its recurrence.

MISS K.

It is not a very easy task to comply with your wishes in this respect, since it is scarcely possible to imagine all the difficulties which may arise. If, however, you have an hour to spare this morning, we will paint together, and I will answer any questions which you may think it necessary to ask.

ELLEN.

Oh ! that will be delightful ! Will you first have the kindness to tell me how to manage the eyes ? I have given my picture such a strange, bold look, I cannot endure it.

MISS K.

You have neither made them exactly the

same size, nor put the ~~iris~~^{Pupil} in the proper place ; the rule is, that the pupil should always be exactly in the middle of the iris ; and generally it is the same distance from the bottom of the pupil to the top of the eye-lid, as from the bottom of the pupil to the bottom of the iris. If you will examine your picture, you will find that you have not observed this proportion correctly, but I hope that in future you will pay particular attention to this remark. It is necessary to put a little pale vermilion in the corners of the eye, which you have omitted ; and you have not shaded the white sufficiently. It is the glare which gives boldness, and you should notice the quantity of shade which the eye-lash throws upon the eye, in order to avoid this. You have also made your eye-lid too narrow, and too wiry a line ; besides which, a great deal more attention must be paid to the power of colour on the eye-lid—how spirited it ought to be in one part, and how tender in another.

ELLEN.

I cannot think what is the matter with my brush, it will not make the strokes I would

have it. Yours is twice as obedient. I wish you would be so good as to let me try yours?

MISS K.

Certainly; let us exchange.

ELLEN.

How delightfully this works! Ah! I knew there was a difference! I shall make quite another thing of my picture now. What colours must I use for the hands?

MISS K.

Vermilion and ultramarine; and for the white drapery, you must use white shaded with indigo, seppia, and purple madder, mixed very pale.

ELLEN.

How am I to paint this pearl necklace?

MISS K.

The ^{eye} centre must be a white dot, the semi-circular shade ultramarine and raw Sienna, mixed. The outside rim must be purple madder, and Vandyke brown. This last colour is, indeed, very useful in many parts of the face to finish the shadows.

ELLEN.

How must I have painted a coral necklace?

MISS K.

With vermilion and a *little* purple madder. Gold ornaments must have the form first defined with white, and then subdued with yellow. They must be shaded with purple madder and Vandyke brown.

ELLEN.

How very strange this is! Can you believe it possible that this brush is become just as troublesome as the other was before we exchanged them?

MISS K.

I can believe it very easily.

ELLEN.

But what can be the reason?

MISS K.

Your manner of filling it with colour. Unless a brush be properly filled, it never can be obedient. You waste so much time in mixing the colours on your palette, that the brush becomes clogged and will not act. If you will notice my brush, you will see that

I take up very little more colour than is absolutely put upon the ivory.

ELLEN.

That is the reason also, I suppose, why your glasses of water are so much cleaner than mine. The water you wash your brushes in is clearer than that I use to paint with.

MISS K.

Yes ; and thus you see my colours are infinitely clearer and brighter than yours.

ELLEN.

But is that an advantage ? Did you not tell me that glaring colours produced a bad effect, and that all the tints should be subdued, so as to give a general harmony of tone ?

MISS K.

I did so ; but there is an exceedingly great difference between this and letting your colours have a muddy appearance. Your picture, indeed, should be brilliant in every light, though it may be difficult to say what hue predominates ; and your outlines should be clear, though never harsh. You must here observe, that an outline never continues of the same power throughout ; if it begin

strong, it ends soft, and *vice versâ*; keeping up the light and shade in every respect. The edges of your picture should be also attended to. They should be neither too hard nor ragged; and should always be properly defined.

ELLEN.

Heigho! how many things are required to form a good painting. I did not think it had been half so difficult!

MISS K.

You must never despair; for success is often nearest when you least expect it. You ought carefully to avoid the extremes of either too much, or too little confidence in your own powers. Let the labour of your hand always join with the study of your mind; and let each support and strengthen the other. Avoid blunting the brilliancy of your genius, however, by too much thought; for the finest conceptions may be sometimes marred by cold calculations as to the manner in which they are to be executed; and too much assiduity may abate the vigour of your mind. The early part of the morning

is the most proper time for studying those particulars which require the greatest pains and application ; and you should never pass a day without devoting some portion of it (however short) to painting. Both the hand and mind require to be constantly exercised ; and as the powers of the magnet are increased by the weight appended to it, so do the talents expand from careful and regular cultivation.

ELLEN.

I will endeavour, if possible, to put your rules in practice, though, alas ! I fear I shall never be able to attain excellence. How differently do I now feel to what I did when I began ! I thought, because I saw you produce a painting which pleased me, in a short time, and with apparently very little trouble, that I might do the same—I now find my mistake.

MISS K.

It is now time to leave off—think upon what I have said, and remember that your present study and labour will be rewarded by after facility. It is said, that Vandyke could

paint a portrait in a few hours so as to produce the finest possible effect ; but this could never have been done, if he had not previously learned, with great time and labour, the exact position in which each touch was to be placed. Depend upon it, if you wish to produce a beautiful and highly finished painting, the labour of the head is required much more than that of the hand.

CONVERSATION THE FOURTH.

ELLEN.

I FORGOT to ask you, my dear Miss K., when we last met, what colour I should use for the forehead and ears, and I have consequently been afraid to touch those parts with the rest.

MISS K.

You must use ultramarine, with raw Sienna and very little vermilion, for the first; and yellow and vermilion pale for the latter.

ELLEN.

What must be done the fourth sitting? for your last directions only extended to the third.

MISS K.

In the fourth sitting you have merely to endeavour to increase the resemblance according to the best of your judgment: you should also show it to your friends, to know whether they approve of the likeness; and

should profit by their remarks, to discover the defects. Not that I mean you to comply implicitly with all the alterations suggested, since every one sees a picture with different eyes, and their approbation or disapprobation is often merely a matter of fancy, which has little reference to the real merits of the work. The advantage to be reaped by submitting your productions to the judgment of others, is, that by this plan your eyes are often opened to deficiencies which you would not otherwise have remarked. When a picture has been long before you, its lines all become so familiar to your sight, that you are unable to distinguish between the good and bad ; the observations of a third person will awaken your attention, and you will be enabled to remove faults which you might not otherwise have seen.

ELLEN.

I am glad you do not advise me to change everything that may be found fault with, since I might destroy parts in compliance with the wishes of one friend, which if retained would have been admired by another.

MISS K.

Never make any alterations unless your own judgment be first convinced that they are requisite. It is only weak persons who either adopt or reject advice indiscriminately—those who possess good sense, reflect on what they hear, and form their resolutions accordingly. We must now resume our former subject. You will find it necessary to heighten all your tints, and to subdue those touches which may appear too hard by dotting off. The work indeed is now rapidly drawing near its close; for another sitting only will be required to finish the picture.

ELLEN.

How shall I know when it is finished, for every time I look at it I always find something fresh to do?

MISS K.

So long as you continue to improve either the likeness or the picture, it will be advisable to go on; but the very instant you find that your last touch has not been an improvement, it is time to leave off. I own it is very difficult to know when you have done enough.—

A French philosopher says, that the only thing which men require to make them attain perfection is, to know when to stop ; and it is certain there is a point like the zenith of a circle, which if we go beyond we must descend. It is, however, extremely hard to judge when you have gained this point ; for one touch leads to another, and you are led on till perhaps your picture is spoiled.

ELLEN.

I think, then, that I had better not do any more to the face just at present.—Does not the background want a little finish ?

MISS K.

It does ; and this should be done with rather a larger sized touch than the flesh parts, as this method will give additional delicacy to the face : your drapery also requires softening ; you must subdue and connect the tints, for if one be more gaudy than the rest, it will arrest the attention too much, and take from the general interest of the picture.

ELLEN.

This reminds me of what you said before respecting the general harmony of the whole.

MISS K.

It is a principle which it is impossible to repeat too often. I can compare the blending the different parts of a picture only to female perfection ; which consists of an assemblage of excellencies, each of them suited to the rest, but no one outshining the others. It is thus only that a character can be formed to attract universal love and reverence ; there should be an union of charms each separately exciting interest, but no charm predominating. A fine painting should be like a chord in music ; every part, though different in itself, should be in exact accordance with another, and it is this perfect harmony which can alone satisfy either the ear or eye. If one part be well done, it ought to raise in you a strong desire to have it equalled by the rest ; since, unless this be the case, its beauty will only more strongly display the negligence of the subordinate parts, and make their deformity more visible.

ELLEN.

But how am I to know when I have attained this harmony, as you term it ?

MISS K.

Choose the dusk of the evening to examine your picture attentively, for that purpose. You will then see its faults better than in the strong light of day. If any parts appear too bright, or unsuited to the rest, make a memorandum in your mind to subdue them on the morrow. You must also notice what parts appear too dark, or too faint, or in any way extraordinary, that you may make them more brilliant, darker, or, in short, alter them as your taste may dictate. Should you be too impatient to wait for evening, you may choose a dark corner of the room, or use any expedient to throw your picture into shadow. You will find out many errors by this expedient.

ELLEN.

Surely you do not mean me to paint in the dark ?

MISS K.

No ; it is merely to ascertain what may be required in your picture, that you should examine it by this light ; you may make your alterations afterwards. You should also try

the effect of candle-light, which is particularly useful to enable you to judge how much pink you may venture to put on the face.

ELLEN.

And is this all I am to do at the fourth sitting? Will not the face require some attention? You do not notice that.

MISS K.

What I have just told you must be done previously to finishing the face; in fact, it should precede the fourth sitting. It is not possible for me to do otherwise than depart a little now and then from the exact formality of each sitting, since you must be informed of every casual thing, as we are not likely to meet again for some time. I wish to implant general principles in your mind first; we will then see how they apply to the particular instance before us. For this reason, after having directed you how to attend to the general harmony of your picture, I shall, before telling you how to finish your face, say something as to its expression.

ELLEN.

There is my greatest difficulty; for though

every feature in my picture is tolerably like, I see plainly that it wants expression. Indeed it has such a wooden look, that I cannot bear to look at it.

MISS K.

It is only the most highly cultivated gifts of painting, that will enable you to convey all that you desire with regard to expression. Your fingers must first be able to be perfectly in obedience to your mind ; and, when your practice has been sufficient to give you that docility of hand and pencil, you must then try to catch the moments, the fugitive glance which flashes from the eye, or the beaming smile which lights up every feature. This is the most sublime effort of the art ; and it can never be acquired, unless you possess so refined a sense of feeling yourself, as to have the momentary expression of your subject instantly and strongly impressed upon your mind, and as instantly, to have your soul at your fingers' ends, to transmit the effect to your ivory. Thus only can you ever hope to trace

Feelings too vivid and too keen to last ;
Bright as the rainbow's hues—fading as fast.

When you have attained this faculty, then, and then only, call yourself a painter ; for not till then does the tender enchantment of painting disclose itself ; and not till then can you have the power to throw over the features you have traced the magic of expression.

ELLEN.

I feel every instant, more acutely than before, the difficulties of the task I have undertaken. I attend to all you say, and think I understand you perfectly, and yet I cannot produce the effect I wish, when I try to put your rules in practice. You told me to make the general tone of the face harmonious. I accordingly made all the colours of the same power, one as dark as another, yet the effect was not pleasing ; it was too hard, and the lines seemed chiselled out of stone. I then tried to make it paler, and have softened it down so much, that it looks quite tame.

MISS K.

You have not observed with sufficient care what I said about the outlines ; and you have made the lines of an equal darkness from one end to the other ; this should not be. If you

begin soft, you must end hard ; and if you begin hard, you must end soft. It is the stiff, hard line, which destroys the effect. You should have, occasionally, a spirited touch, and then blend it off to extreme tenderness. The same rule must be observed with all your shadows. They must begin hard and end soft. Contrast, indeed, should be attended to in every thing ; whether in light or shade ; hardness or softness. You will find the study of a bunch of grapes useful to explain what I mean by the contrast of lines and forms. If you notice the general outline, you will find the grapes sink in on one side, and swell out on the other, producing a beautiful effect. You must observe the contrast between their strong light and dark shade ; and you will also find them made out to the full size in one part, and diminished to nothing on the other.

ELLEN.

Yes ; but it is the perspective which gives that ; and your present allusion to the subject reminds me, that you have as yet said nothing of perspective.

MISS K.

Very little is required for portraits. At some future time, when you attempt composition, or the combining of figures into groupes, I will instruct you in this; at present, we have plenty of other things to attend to. Remember the lesson I gave you respecting the bunch of grapes; as, by keeping this in mind, you will assist greatly both the grace and feeling of your miniature. This rule of contrast should, indeed, be closely attended to in every part of your painting. It is bad taste to put two warm colours near together; and, unless a cold one be introduced between them, the harmony of the whole will be destroyed.

ELLEN.

I do not at all understand what you mean.

MISS K.

Certain colours do not harmonise with each other; and, like discords in music, produce a disagreeable, instead of a pleasing effect. Thus, if you have introduced red into your picture, the eye requires that it should be contrasted with green; orange or gold im-

proves blue ; and yellow gives a better tone to lilac—the three primitive colours being blue, red, and yellow.

ELLEN.

Are there only *three* primitive colours ? Surely there must be a great many more !

MISS K.

All the composite colours are formed from these :—orange is made with red and yellow ; lilac with red and blue ; green with yellow and blue, &c. The three primitive colours together form black.

ELLEN.

I think I shall now be able to proceed ; but there is one thing which I had forgotten to ask till now. How must I shade the drapery ? I suppose with the same colour made stronger ?

MISS K.

By no means ; as that would produce a gaudy effect. All shadows are grey ; though it requires a cultivated eye to know the exact tint ; for if it be too dark it will give heaviness, and if too light it will want effect. There are two kinds of grey, also, the warm and cold, which are proper in different situ-

ations. I can give no exact directions as to this, for your own eye must decide both as to the quantity of colour and the tint. Sometimes a little yellow or ultramarine should be added to heighten the effect ; but this, also, must be learnt by practice.

ELLEN.

Will it not be a good plan to study ancient pictures in order to improve my eye, and to judge of the effect of colouring?

MISS K.

Nothing can be better ; as you will then see in what manner different colours and tints are blended so as to produce an harmonious effect. To explain this more fully, we will take a well-known picture, and analyze its colouring throughout : suppose we fix upon the “ Two Misers ” of Quintin Matsys, the celebrated blacksmith of Antwerp, whom love taught to become a painter.

ELLEN.

How was that ?

MISS K.

Quintin Matsys was a common smith at Antwerp, working every day at the forge,

when he fell in love with the daughter of an artist in the same town ; the father of the lady rejected his suit, and told him that he should never marry his daughter till he could paint better than himself. Quintin did not despair : he applied all his leisure hours to the acquirement of the art of painting, and by degrees produced some sketches, which attracted the attention of an artist travelling for improvement. This gentleman took Quintin into his service as an assistant and carried him to Rome ; where the aspiring blacksmith gradually learnt to become a painter ; and at the end of ten years returned to claim his promised bride. I mention this anecdote as another proof of what may be done by perseverance.

ELLEN.

I see how wrong it is to despair ; for I was so disgusted with the failure of my first attempt, that if you had not encouraged me to proceed, I should never have touched a painting-brush again.

MISS K.

Which you would have been very sorry for,

I assure you. To resume the subject we have digressed from. I choose the picture of the “Two Misers” as an illustration, both because it has been often copied and is consequently very well known, and because the colours are sufficiently plain and simple to suit our purpose. Besides which, I feel a particular interest in this painting from the circumstance of my copy of it having been honoured with the approbation of his present Majesty ;— whose distinguished taste for the fine arts, and perfect knowledge of their various excellencies is equally conspicuous as his exalted rank. The story of the subject is this : “Two Misers” are arranging the marriage settlement of their son and daughter. The cajoling miser is trying to obtain as large a fortune from the lady’s father as possible ; who, on the other hand, seems determined to part with as little as he can, for he is counting, with extreme care, even the copper, and making a memorandum of it ; thus showing, as strongly as any thing can do, *his* miserly temper ; while the candle on the shelf above, recently extinguished, is in per-

fect keeping with the rest. Thus far relates to the subject of the picture : we will now proceed to the colouring, which is equally excellent. The principal tints are yellow or wainscot, green, red, white, and black. The wall is wainscot ; the two misers are sitting at a table covered with green ; one has a green cap and red dress ; the other a red cap and green dress ; while, to carry on the colour of the wall, one has a bag in his hand of a yellowish brown. On the table is a kind of double bag, with a handle, which has a chequered pattern upon it, containing all the colours of the picture. The bags thus joined together are of a yellowish brown, and in this manner that colour is continued through the whole. The green may be traced in the same way : from the green table we ascend to the green dress of one of the misers, and above his head, upon a perch, is a green parrot with a red beak ; the line of red being carried to a shelf over the parrot, where there is a candle apparently just blown out, and still red with the remainder of fire left in the wick ; this touches the boundary. On the

same shelf is a bundle of papers with green ties, which carry on the colour green to the same point. White may be traced from these papers downwards, first, to a piece of white paper seemingly pasted against the wall; then the miser himself is engaged in writing in a book, the leaves of which are white, though the covering is the wall or wainscot colour: on the table, so as to form the extreme edge of the picture, is a piece of white cotton, which a jewel appears to have been wrapped in. Every other part of the picture is also managed with consummate art, and contrasts are preserved throughout; one miser has a light background, and the other dark. This is contrived by leaving a door open behind him, so as to throw a natural shade in that place. In short the whole picture should be carefully and frequently studied to appreciate fully its powerful and various excellencies.

ELLEN.

What you say astonishes me! I have seen that picture a hundred times, and I never perceived any of the parts which you have

pointed out, though I always admired the expression of the faces.

MISS K.

It requires the eye of an artist to discover all the perfections of this admirable work, the contrasts of which are as beautifully kept up as the lines of colour are continued ;—indeed, the longer it is looked at, and the more closely it is examined, the more strongly both admiration and astonishment are excited: the expression of the two faces is also contrasted : one is cajoling, the other serious ; one with bad sight and wearing spectacles, the other with none. In fact it is impossible to point out all the masterly combinations of this picture ; but what I have said will, I trust, induce you to examine it yourself.

ELLEN.

I certainly will, and I will also try all the other pictures which I may meet with by the same rule.

MISS K.

It is a good plan, whenever you see a good picture, by any master whether ancient or modern, to endeavour to find out its peculiar

merits ; you will thus, if you afterwards copy it, know what parts deserve the most attention ; and even if you do not, it will expand your ideas. It is impossible to estimate properly the value of any work, till you know something of the difficulties which the artist has had to contend with ; or in other words, till you know in what its chief excellencies consist. Supposing you were to examine Titian's Daughter for instance, merely as an amateur, you would think it a fine picture, and that would be all ; but when you look at it with the eyes of an artist, the case is different, and your admiration is increased by a knowledge of the rules by which it has been designed : you will first observe how carefully every line is arranged ; the simple and complex always contrasting each other, so as to avoid monotony, and yet appear in perfect harmony : you will then notice that every line which begins with firmness ends with tenderness ; you will be charmed with the artful manner in which the red of the curtain is contrasted with the yellow of the hair ; how it is mellowed by the soft blue grey of the sky,

and rendered forcible by the casket and dark ground at the top of the picture. Every tint is in its proper place, and is positively essential to the harmony of the whole. The colours on the casket unite the yellow of the hair, the green of the dress, the black of the beads, the grey of the charger.

ELLEN.

It is certainly very interesting to trace these proofs of art, but is it useful to any one but a connoisseur?

MISS K.

It is these kind of observations which alone can form an artist; for without something to lead you to form a plan when you try to paint an original picture, your efforts never can be crowned with success. In the old masters you seldom find a decided colour, unless for some particular purpose, such as the dresses of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary.

ELLEN.

I observed when I was on the continent, that their dresses were always of the most violent opposition and colour, such as blue and red, or a bright green. How is this to be accounted for?

MISS K.

The characteristics of our Saviour and the Virgin, are extreme meekness and tenderness; consequently they could not be the principal objects in a picture, which contained figures of a strongly marked expression, unless there were something in their dress to force them upon the notice by violent contrast. This apparent harshness, therefore, is absolutely necessary to arrest the eye at the place where the principal figures are, and it not only does this, but assists also to convey to their countenances that transcendent benignity which characterises the expression of divinity.

ELLEN.

I will do my best to attend to your observations, and if to-morrow will suit I will pay you another visit.

MISS K.

To-morrow, then, I shall expect the favour of your company, and I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing your picture nearly finished.

CONVERSATION THE FIFTH.

ELLEN.

I HAVE shewn mamma's portrait to several of my friends, my dear Miss K. ; and they are so much pleased with it, that they all want me to paint theirs. My brother Dudley is particularly anxious, for he has just got a commission in the Guards ; and he is so vain of his red coat, that he wants me to immortalize him in it with my pencil.

MISS K.

By all means do so, if you can. Practice is now all you require ; and it is not possible for you to make a more pleasing use of your newly-acquired talent, than by employing it on your own family.

ELLEN.

I suppose the same rules will apply to Dudley as mamma, whom he resembles, though his complexion is much darker.

MISS K.

The rules which I have given you, will of course apply to all portraits, with a few exceptions. Your brother, for instance, will require to have the lines in his face expressed more strongly than those in the face of your mamma; though even he will not want them so black as your first sketch.

ELLEN.

Oh! pray don't mention that! I don't wish ever to think of it again.

MISS K.

The touches in your brother's portrait must be stronger, and you must take rather more colour in your brush than was necessary for your Mamma, though not so much even of that as you used to do formerly. But I forgot, this is another tender subject, which, perhaps, you find it painful for me to refer to; though some persons might suppose the recollection of past errors would be the best plan to prevent the commission of fresh ones.

ELLEN.

I know what you mean, and that you

probably think me very silly and very vain, not to like to hear of my faults ; but just at that moment, when I was thinking of the praises I had received, it was so provoking to be reminded of my blunders, that—that—

MISS K.

You lost your temper, as well as your patience. I do not, however, agree with you in thinking my observation ill timed ; for it is in the moment of success that we ought to recollect our previous failures, not only to prevent us from becoming conceited, but also to encourage us to persevere.

ELLEN.

Perhaps you are right ; but now, will you have the kindness to tell me how to paint a red coat ?

MISS K.

First put on vermilion thick, and as plain as you can ; let it dry carefully ; then take seppia, indigo, and purple madder (the last colour considerably in the greater proportion), and put in all the shades, such as those formed by the wrinkles in the coat, or the shadow of the arm upon the figure. When

this is carefully done, you must retouch, with plain thick vermilion, the edges of your shadow, which will soften the hard and dark into the bright. You must then proceed to put on white paint the pattern of the gold, and paint it afterwards according to the direction given in our previous conversation respecting gold ornaments, attending carefully to the lightest parts, which are either on the top of the epaulettes, or in a little bright sparkle at the bottom. You must take care to make the gold most bright at the top of the figure, and subdue it as you proceed. A blue or black coat will require the same process, excepting that, for a blue coat, indigo must be the ground colour; and for a black coat, either India ink or ivory black, as you please.

ELLEN.

Oh! I don't think I should ever have patience to paint a black coat; it must be very tiresome!

MISS K.

Coats are generally troublesome to paint, as they require a considerable body of colour

to be laid on thick, and as even as possible—both rather difficult achievements for a young artist. Now let me see your mamma's portrait, which I suppose is nearly finished. Hah! is this all you have done to it?

ELLEN.

How grave you look! I'm afraid you don't like it at all, and I am quite vexed.

MISS K.

It certainly does not meet my ideas of your Mamma's expression; it is too serious.

ELLEN.

And yet I am sure I tried all I could, and tried and tried again, but I could not obtain the expression any better. What am I to do?

MISS K.

You should have caught the moments. This painting seems copied from waxwork or stone.

ELLEN.

But mamma was so tired and dull, that all I did was of no use.

MISS K.

Perhaps you did not converse, and this, I assure you, is a most important point to

attend to ; for when you wish to catch any particular expression of your subjects, instead of saying, “ Now put on a smile,” which would remind them of what must be most painful to hear, namely, that they must put on their best looks, for you are painting their picture, you should endeavour to say something pleasant. The most trifling observation, provided it be agreeable, will suffice to brighten up the countenance ; and then you must be on the watch for that momentary look, to transfer it to your ivory. By this means you are benefited, and the patience of your subject not put too severely to the test.

ELLEN.

But how shall I be able to paint if I am obliged to talk all the time ?

MISS K.

You quite misunderstand me if you suppose you are to do that ; for too much talking would spoil the picture, by taking off your attention, while to converse in moderation is of the utmost consequence, for the reasons I have just given.

ELLEN.

Mamma told me that she was sure you never made your subjects sit so still as I oblige her to be ; and she does not like it, for she says that the last sitting should be more like a morning visit.

MISS K.

You should make every sitting as much like a morning visit as you possibly can, after the first half hour of the first sitting.

ELLEN.

First half hour ! How long then do you call a sitting ?

MISS K.

An hour, and a little longer, if there be no fatigue.

ELLEN.

I shall remember what you have said about the moments, and will try to make Mamma look more alive ; but pray, is there anything else to attend to particularly in this last sitting ?

MISS K.

Nothing, but what your own judgment will dictate ; such as a little more colour perhaps

to the different parts of the picture ; care to make even a ragged edge ; also to give a more spirited touch wherever you may find it wanted, and to do away with all superfluous touches. When you have completed this to your satisfaction, cut a piece of Bristol cardboard, and fasten your picture to it, at the four corners with gum.

ELLEN.

Will any gum do ?

MISS K.

No : you must provide an ounce of gum-arabic, and a quarter of an ounce of white sugar-candy, and put them into a small bottle : then cover these ingredients with water, (soft water is the best) and add about three or four drops of spirit, such as Eau de Cologne, or lavender water, and let it stand till it is quite dissolved.

ELLEN.

Why should I prefer soft water ?

MISS K.

Because it mixes better with the ingredients ; if not in your power to procure soft water, take pump water that has been boiled.

ELLEN.

I suppose it is of no consequence about the water, whether hard or soft to paint with?

MISS K.

I beg your pardon, it is quite material; you will find your colours work much best with soft water, or that which has been boiled.

ELLEN.

I think I now have learnt all that is necessary; but I had forgotten one thing,—how must I paint my brother's cravat?

MISS K.

With ultramarine, vermilion, and a little raw Sienna if white. If a black stock, you already know what would be necessary; the buttons must be put on after the coat is painted.

ELLEN.

My uncle, to whose seat I am going, is a clergyman; how must I manage to paint his gown, if he should also wish his portrait?

MISS K.

I see that you are determined to *immortalize* your whole family, as well as your brother; however I am much pleased to find that you

intend to paint so many portraits, and being anxious that you should cultivate your inclination for the art, I will willingly give you all the information in my power, to enable you to do as many as you please. You must use seppia, indigo, and purple madder, made into a good black, and put on plain for your uncle's gown ; then after it is dry, make your black more intense, and put the shadows on with it ; the darker you wish to make your shades, the thicker must be your colour ; and you will not find it amiss to add ultramarine, and burnt Sienna, in order to give more richness to the deepest shadows.

ELLEN.

Your kindness induces me to trouble you still further, that your advice may enable me to meet all emergencies.—What am I to do if Mamma wishes me to paint my little curly-headed brother? Do you think that I shall be ever able to manage to take his likeness?

MISS K.

I trust so : describe what you wish, and I will endeavour to assist you in finding the means to execute it.

ELLEN.

My little brother is about three or four years old ; he is a rosy-cheeked, laughter-loving, little Cupid ; and I should like to draw him in a garden of flowers.

MISS K.

I think you might, with such a subject, venture to make a sort of fancy picture of him.

ELLEN.

I should like it of all things, only I do not know anything of composition, and I am almost afraid to venture upon that ; though I must own the child at play is so beautifully described in the "Paradise and the Peri," that I am half tempted to try a new branch.

MISS K.

I can scarcely recommend you to study composition generally, till you are more advanced in the art of painting a single figure. However, this little picture of your brother seems likely to be so pretty, that I seriously advise you to attempt it. You should first consider the attitude you would like, as it must be a full length, seated amidst its wreaths of flowers ; and in doing this, you should attend

as much as you can to the following rules. If you intend to have one arm straight, the other should be bent according to your judgment, and the same with the legs: you should also be careful that the bent arm is on the same side as the straight leg, and *vice versâ*, for contrast is now called into action in every respect. When you have decided about the style, and wish to begin your picture, you must first draw the head, and for this purpose form a small circle, and then another, the zenith or highest part of which must begin exactly at the centre of the first; thus you will have two circles divided into three equal parts, and if it be a direct face that you desire to paint, the eyes and eyebrows will be in the middle division of those three; the nose and mouth in the lower division, and in the upper one, the root of the hair, and the top of the head. This done, you must proceed to the figure; across the shoulders of which there is seldom quite so much as a head and a half, or two circles in a child: but this of course varies according to the subject, and a number of circles intersecting each other will

produce all the necessary places and distances, if you attend to them ; and observe carefully to make them all exactly the same size—hence my wish for your learning geometry. The height of the child, supposing it to stand upright, would be five heads, or five and a half, according to the most common proportion ; and the arms from the shoulder to the fingers, two heads. Is this clear enough for the attitude and sketch ?

ELLEN.

I understand so far perfectly ; but what am I to do next ?

MISS K.

When you have adjusted the attitude and proportions according to what I have told you, and drawn the first sketch from the child, you must begin his face ; painting the features all in, and putting the colour upon his cheeks, as much in circles as you can, for that will help to give the round, laughing expression required for them ; his yellow hair must be imitated with raw Sienna and purple madder, in masses ; every now and then turning the masses into the form of an S, as I be-

lieve I before mentioned. When you have succeeded tolerably in this, take some ultramarine, and paint the background round the head, which will tend to relieve it from the ivory, and give it roundness : you must refer to the sky background, which I named in a former conversation, for this. After having given proper effect to the sky, you must, with some pale indigo and India yellow, touch in a few distant trees or wood. When you have done this, throw in near the child, and behind it, some strong colour, not too green, which you must paint as much in the form of a rose-tree as you can. It would be well also, if possible, to introduce a broken wall, the stone colour of which would be very useful on the other side of your picture, and relieve the brighter tints with its sobriety. While, in the foreground, let there be an accidental shadow passing obliquely to the edge of the painting, in order to send the other parts back, and give power to the whole. A fair child requires these artificial methods to give contrast and effect ; and, by following these rules closely, you will, I trust, succeed

in producing a spirited and beautiful picture.

ELLEN.

It will be lovely, if I can but execute all you have told me ; though I am half afraid of undertaking it, it seems so difficult.

MISS K.

You must afterwards proceed through all the other stages, as in your Mamma's portrait ; taking care, however, to make the tips of the fingers very pink.

ELLEN.

I shall be delighted if I can but succeed ; I am sorry to say, however, that I shall not have an opportunity of showing you my progress, as I shall leave town to-morrow, so I shall feel very much obliged if you will give me all the advice you can now, for I am determined to learn if possible, and to astonish you when I come back.

MISS K.

There is one general rule which you must carefully attend to. Do not confine yourself to one style, lest your mind should become fatigued ; but sometimes study from casts,

and sometimes from the old masters, or indeed, from any good statues or pictures of whatsoever date.

ELLEN.

I do not think I shall like anything half so well as taking portraits.

MISS K.

You may still let your principal study be from life, paying great attention to the observations made by good judges upon what you do. When you approve of their remarks, reflect upon them ; and, at the next opportunity, try to obtain the ideas of others on the same subject. When you have done this, endeavour to make comparisons between the two ; and, as it were, to cull the essence of the combined thoughts of both, to adopt as your own. It is by these ways alone that you can improve your mind in this respect ; since you are likely to be too much engaged in study to be able to seek yourself after pictures, statues, &c., in a sufficient quantity to be of decided use in forming your taste and judgment ; and thus, those who wish for practical excellence must listen to the opinions

of the connoisseur, who has had better opportunities for information, though his sight and mind may have been too much extended to have allowed him time for the drudgery of the practical part.

“One science only will one genius fit ;

“So vast is art, so narrow human wit.”

LOCKE.

ELLEN.

Then I am not to trouble myself with looking at many pictures or statues ?

MISS K.

As many as ever you can, consistently with your study ; as you will find it a great refreshment to your mind, though you must not make a business of it. It is a good plan to have two or three excellent pictures in your painting-room, and look at them occasionally ; also a bust or two, for in that manner you can study, even while engaged upon a picture of your own designing, or a portrait. In painting, indeed, the mind requires two things to engage it at once, and the merely mechanical part should be relieved by something which will rouse the imagination into force.

ELLEN.

How different this is to writing ; for I have heard, that authors cannot bear to have their attention distracted. You have, indeed, told me a great many things that are quite new, and quite different to what I expected. I am, however, delighted with what I have learned, and particularly that I have so soon been able to paint from life.

MISS K.

It is contrary to my usual practice, and adds greatly to the difficulty of the art ; but I complied with your wishes in this respect, on account of the shortness of your stay in town.

ELLEN.

You mentioned something of this before, but I own that I do not even now quite understand why drawing from life should add greatly to the difficulties of the art.

MISS K.

Because it is more difficult to catch the expression of a living face, which is changing every instant, than of a fixed statue, which is always the same. The shade is also

constantly varying in a human face ; and you should have first studied its effect upon a plaster cast, in order to know where it ought to fall, before you attempted to break it properly, so as to express the moments of your subject, or the play of an animated countenance.

ELLEN.

But do not you think it a nobler and higher branch of the art to copy from a living model, than from a statue or picture, however fine they may chance to be ?

MISS K.

Certainly ; and for this reason it should be the last studied. With regard to copying pictures, if you were to confine yourself to that alone, your mind would never burst from its trammels, but would slumber on for ever in ignorance of the higher and more delightful branches of painting. Nevertheless, a copy now and then, from a good picture, gives you the following useful sort of information : it shows you how other artists have treated the subject they have painted ; and it enables you to observe whether there is any

difference in their mode of colouring ; which, if for the better, you should attend to with the utmost care, in order to profit by it yourself. After this, you should endeavour to think, if you had had that face to paint, whether you would have followed the same plan ; if not, and your's seems not so excellent as that of the picture before you, you should seek to discover the reason why that plan was adopted. You will thus have an opportunity of correcting your error, and judging better in future. No kind of knowledge is more useful than this ; for it is only by comparison and reflection that excellence is to be obtained. Copying the old masters occasionally will also give you a perfect eye, and taste for harmony ; time having so blended and subdued all the tints in old paintings, that your mind, when studying them, becomes entranced (if I may use the term), and you try without ceasing to impart some of the charm which has delighted you, to your own pictures.

ELLEN.

Then you think pictures better to copy from than plaster casts or statues ?

MISS K.

If you direct your study wholly to any one branch, it will be disadvantageous to you ; for any kind of mannerism is disagreeable ; and your style must become mannered if you copy always from the same kind of model : for instance, we will begin with statues or plaster casts :—too intimate an attention to these will give your hand a hard stony style of drawing, till you get only the power of producing a cold marble-like effect in your picture ; or a still, solemn grandeur that will not accord with a portrait, which you should aim to paint so as to make it to look alive.

ELLEN.

I am afraid I have not quite succeeded in doing that in my picture.

MISS K.

I cannot say that you have ; in fact, it is exactly in the style against which I wish to guard you ; for it looks as if drawn from a painted statue, instead of being the portrait of a living person. It is also bad to copy always from paintings, as you acquire the style of the masters whose works you imitate, rather than

form one of your own. Again, it does not answer to paint continually from life, not only because the restlessness of your subject prevents you from gaining a perfect knowledge of either outline, or light and shade ; but also because it is judicious to study occasionally statues, in order to impress upon your mind the *beau ideal* of the ancient sculptors, to render your hand and eye more capable of finding out the best lines of the face you wish to draw.

ELLEN.

Alas ! Alas ! how much is required to form an artist !

MISS K.

Much indeed : for the qualities to make an excellent painter should be a true discerning judgment, a teachable mind, a noble heart, a sublime sense of things, and a fervour of soul : added to which, it is necessary to have health, a convenient fortune, diligence, fondness for study, and good instruction.

ELLEN.

What an enumeration ! I am quite ter-

rified at the thought ; for I am sure that I shall never possess one half the qualities you mention.

MISS K.

You need not fear, since you possess that natural taste for the art, which only needs cultivation to ensure perfection ; and without which (whether the subject be of your own choice, or put into your hands by another) you could never hope to succeed ; for talent, and mere mechanical operation, are as distinct as light from darkness ; and you must be indebted to genius alone for all the greatest beauties of the art.

ELLEN.

A thousand thanks, my dear Miss K., for your kind encouragement. I shall now leave town quite in spirits, and I hope, when I see you again, to be able to boast of the progress I have made.

MISS K.

I shall be most happy to find, on your return, that you have a little gallery of paintings to show me. Take care, however, not to injure your health by too much application ;

and remember always to have your painting-desk or easel so arranged, that you may sit perfectly upright when you paint. Nothing, indeed, can be more injurious than constantly bending over your work : not only does the chest become contracted, and the health seriously injured, but the eyes are strained from their natural position, and the sight much hurt by being thrown out of its proper focus. This is very important for you to attend to ; for, if you never paint but in the manner I have advised, you will find that the more the eyes are used, the stronger they become, provided they have no original tendency to disease. I do not, however, wish you, even in this position, to do any thing which requires a particularly attentive sight, by candle-light, for the wavering glare is very bad. One thing more, and I have done. Do not let your eagerness to paint every subject that comes in your way, make you forget that works of art are valued more for their merit than their number.

ELLEN.

I understand your hint, and I will profit by

it, so as not to undertake more than I shall have time to finish properly. Farewell; I know not how sufficiently to express my obligations, since you have given me the means of making what I expected would be a dull visit, pass delightfully; and I trust that we shall resume our conversations when I return.

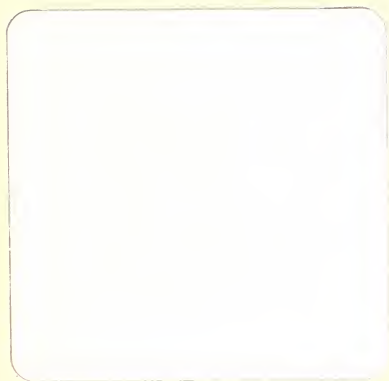
MISS K.

Most willingly; and we will then proceed to other things which would have been superfluous in our late interviews. I will not let you depart, however, without saying, that if you should happen to meet with a lay figure (I mean a wooden figure jointed and as large as life), you will find it very useful to put your draperies, &c. on for painting. A figure of this kind being always still, the folds of the drapery can never alter, which they must unavoidably do if you paint them from a living subject; and I need scarcely suggest to you, how much well-arranged drapery adds to the grace and elegance of a picture. And, in the hope that you may find all the benefit I wish from your visits to me, I repeat what

Mr. West, the late president of the Royal Academy, said to me when a beginner. "Go on and prosper ; you are in the right road." I assure you this encouraging speech has never been absent from my mind ; but has formed one of the stimulants to my own exertions ; and now, farewell.

THE END.

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